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Australia's offshore
energy regulator

Mental Health and Other Things Concerning Us

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DrillSafe

2 September 2021

nopsema.gov.au



Today

- Mental Health
- Deferred Maintenance
- Crane Safety and Preventative Maintenance
- New Website

Mental Health



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What it was

RU OK?TM

A conversation could change a life.



What's Happened



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March 2020

Australian border close
First Lockdowns/restrictions

March 2020

Australia's First COVID-19
death

July 2020

Interstate border closures
Hotel Quarantines

September 2020

Sign-in apps

Q2 2020

Lockdowns/restrictions

Aug 2021

200 days of lockdown in
Melbourne
7th Lockdown in Melbourne

April 2021

Perth snap 3-day lockdown

COVID-19
VACCINATION



What it is



- Psychosocial Hazards
 - Isolation periods prior to travelling offshore
 - Changes to work schedules/rosters
 - Extended swings
 - Requests for workers to relocate to avoid border closures
 - Not seeing family
 - “Are my earmuffs being cleaned?”
- Can lead to
 - Fatigue
 - Stress
 - Anxiety
 - Human error
 - Other symptoms of psychological distress

Worker Fatigue



Safety Alert

Revision 2 May 2020

COVID-19 roster changes

What happened?

NOPSEMA has been actively pursuing the threat posed by COVID-19 and has published an extensive range of documents on its website in support of industry managing these risks (<https://www.nopsema.gov.au/news-and-publications/covid-19/>).

As a result of this NOPSEMA is now aware that many operators are considering the introduction of modified roster arrangements to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission amongst members of the offshore workforce. These proposed roster changes typically include an onshore quarantine period prior to travelling offshore to reduce transmission risks, however often involve extending offshore periods. While recognising that these modifications are being introduced in response to a rapidly evolving situation, NOPSEMA has received concerns in relation to some of the proposed rosters and the manner in which the roster changes have been introduced. For example:

- insufficient workforce consultation in relation to the changes
- insufficient consideration of fatigue risk
- insufficient consideration of psychosocial hazards to workers and their families
- poor communication to the workforce of proposed additional control measures intended to minimise the risks introduced through roster changes
- introduction of roster changes outside of the Management of Change processes described in facility safety cases
- insufficient consideration of the impact that proposed roster changes may have on Major Accident Event (MAE) risk across the facility.

NOPSEMA has undertaken some inspections in response to proposed COVID-19 roster modifications, and will continue to do so to ensure that facility operators are utilising appropriate workforce consultation, risk assessment, and management of change processes.

What could go wrong?

Fatigue risks associated with extended rosters include increased likelihood of injury (physical fatigue) and error (mental fatigue). Increased likelihood of error caused by mental fatigue can increase MAE likelihood for MAEs with control measures that are critical human tasks. That is, those activities people are expected to perform as barriers against the occurrence of an incident, or to prevent escalation in the event that an incident does occur, including activities required to support or maintain physical and technological barriers.

Psychosocial risks associated with extended rosters include onset or exacerbation of psychological injury such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. The 'resting level' of anxiety among the general population is arguably higher than normal in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of extended rosters may therefore represent a greater psychosocial risk than would otherwise be the case.

Research suggests that Fly-In Fly-Out workers may experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms than that of the general population. Members of the workforce with previous or pre-



GUIDANCE NOTE

Avoiding Fatigue

Document No: N-09000-GN1397 A392817

Date: 21/05/2020

Core concepts

- The Commonwealth *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Safety) Regulations 2009* stipulate that a person must not allow, or require, a member of the workforce, who is under the person's control, to work for a continuous or successive period of time that could reasonably be expected to have an adverse effect on the health or safety of that member of the workforce or other people at or near the facility.
- Reducing the exposure of the offshore workforce to the hazards of fatigue and shift work is in line with the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022.



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Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) survey variable work schedules - September 2020

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[Document](#)
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SHINING A LIGHT ON OFFSHORE MENTAL HEALTH

As part of a series of surveys undertaken by NOPSEMA to gain information from offshore petroleum industry operators about systems and arrangements in place to manage risks associated with COVID-19, NOPSEMA has asked facility operators to prepare responses to specific questions about psychosocial risk.

Due to border closures, travel restrictions and quarantine requirements in light of COVID-19, some offshore workers have been spending time in isolation and working longer swing patterns, separated from family and friends. There are genuine concerns about the impacts and consequences of extended periods away from home on the mental health and general wellbeing of workers.

While initial inspections of operators' arrangements for dealing with COVID-19 indicate that the vast majority of dutyholders have appropriate and reasonable

arrangements in place for transmission risks among personnel, NOPSEMA is concerned about the longer-term mental health effects of the pandemic.

The introduction of isolation periods prior to travelling offshore, changes to work schedules and requests for workers to relocate to avoid border closures can contribute to fatigue, stress, anxiety and other psychosocial hazards. Given the risks associated with mental health, NOPSEMA is conducting a review of operators' approaches to managing mental health risk.

Based on the results of surveys and inspections, NOPSEMA has published examples of better practices in psychosocial risk management. These will inform industry advice and guidance prepared by NOPSEMA for sharing with Australian offshore facility operators, state regulators, international regulators through the International Regulators' Forum, health and safety representatives and members of the offshore petroleum industry workforce.

“ IF YOU NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO, CALL: ”

- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800
- MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467
- Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36
- Headspace on 1800 650 890
- QLife on 1800 184 527



THE REGULATOR 13

Offshore Worker Mental Health Survey

- Mental Health Working Group
 - NOPSEMA; APPEA; Principal Offshore Unions
- Offshore Worker Mental Health Survey
 - Curtin University; University of Western Australia
 - Psychosocial impacts of COVID-19
 - Development of strategies that best support employee mental health and well-being.
 - Closed 9/08/21
 - **500 participants – THANK YOU**
 - Under analysis – will report back



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



**Curtin
University**

Awareness and Help



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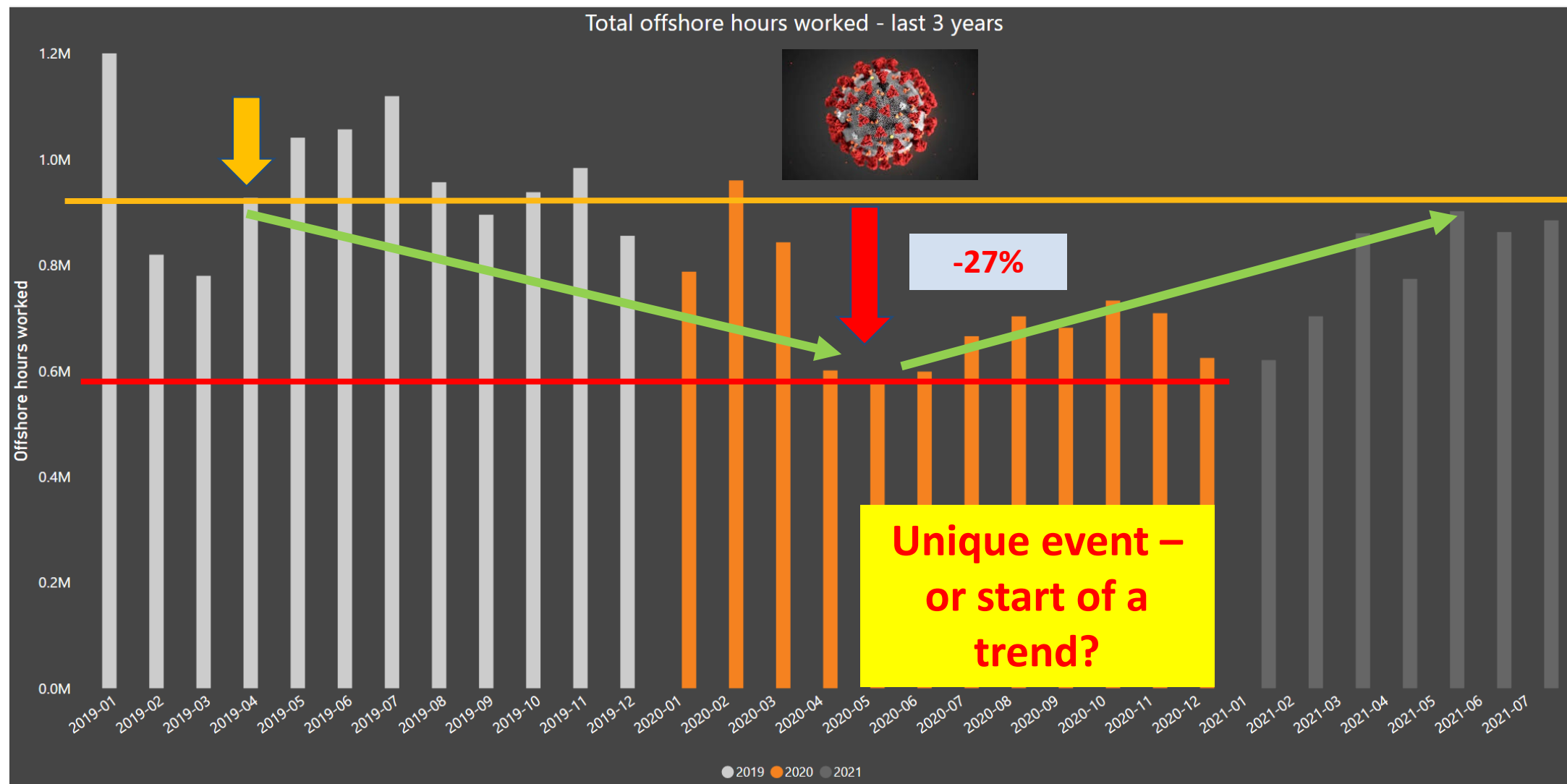
Deferred Maintenance



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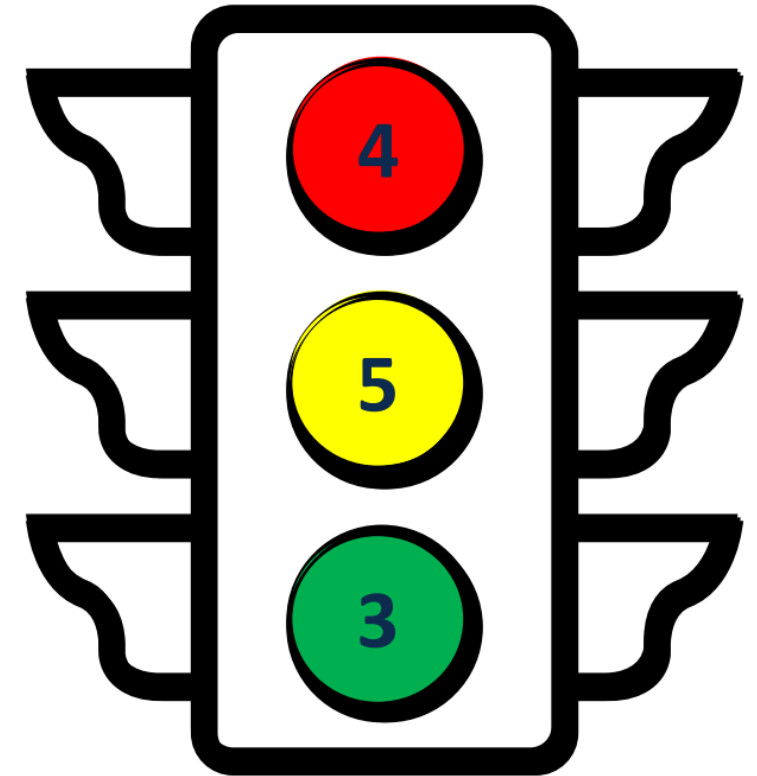
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Deferred Maintenance

- The 'Effective Operator' uses maintenance deferral to
 - ...
 - Respond to inevitable, but unplanned events (e.g. COVID)
 - Manage and mitigate risk
 - Prioritise activities (e.g. safety critical equipment)
 - Identify trends and respond proactively
 - Allocate resources effectively to reduce risk
- Maintenance deferral is not a tool to ...
 - Justify modifications to performance standards
 - Reduce safety critical assurance activities
 - Re-categorise equipment as non-safety critical
- Seeking better practices
 - Industry survey; engage industry
 - Targeted inspections
 - Work in progress



New Guidance – Aging Assets

Ageing assets and life extension

Document No: N-04300-GN1975 A783718

Date: 24/06/2021

Core concepts

- *“Ageing is not about how old your equipment is; it is about its condition, and how that is changing over time. Ageing is the effect whereby a component suffers some form of material deterioration and damage (usually, but not necessarily, associated with time in service) with an increasing likelihood of failure over the lifetime.”*
[\[1\]](#)
- *“...just because an item of equipment is old, it does not necessarily mean that it is significantly deteriorating and unsafe. Take the analogy of a vintage car, lovingly maintained by an enthusiast in fully serviceable condition well past any date that the manufacturer could have anticipated. Such wonderful cars can still be safely driven, but their upkeep is time consuming, spare parts difficult and expensive to source, braking performance and emissions probably not meeting current standards, and different driving skills to modern cars are needed. An ageing offshore facility is similar.”*
[\[2\]](#)
- *“A step-change in safety could be achieved if duty holders fully utilised the trending capabilities, that many of their maintenance management systems offer, to proactively address potential failures before they occur by using trends to predict reduction in performance rather than simply applying the binary ‘pass/fail’ approach to performance standards.”* (Stakeholder feedback)

Crane Safety and Preventative Maintenance



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Crane Safety

July 2020 to May 2021 NOPSEMA was notified of 29 crane-related dangerous occurrences.

In the majority of these occurrences NOPSEMA carried out investigations, and observed varying degrees of gaps in compliance



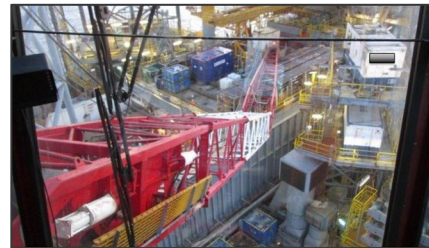
Crane boom failure due to corrosion –
February 2008



Crane boom collapse following failure of
the luffing winch pawl - Nov 2017



Crane collapse – March 2020



Crane boom collapse – February
2020



Preventative Maintenance

Improving Offshore Crane Safety

1. Purpose

The purpose of this discussion paper is to draw industry attention to opportunities for improvement of the management of offshore crane safety, thereby reducing the risks to personnel and the environment from dropped objects and crane failures.

NOPSEMA notes that the statements and examples provided in this paper are not sweeping statements about all of industry, but examples of where deficiencies have been observed and improvements are clearly required.

This paper shall be distributed prior to the workshop in July 2021.

2. Scope

The topic may be applied to all types of cranes installed on offshore facilities; however, it should be acknowledged that much of the inputs observed are in relation to offshore pedestal cranes.

3. Introduction

Within Australian Commonwealth waters there are 67 offshore pedestal cranes in operation on 35 permanently installed production facilities. Additionally, there are several other types of cranes and hoists on facilities as well as a fluctuating number of mobile drilling and vessel facilities fitted with large cranes.

Lifting operations carry inherent dangers and rely on safe cranes to ensure the risks are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP).

In the period 1 July 2020 to 20 May 2021, NOPSEMA recorded 29 crane-related notifications of dangerous occurrences from duty holders. This was a significant increase in notifications from previous years and many of these incidents were common across duty holders. This number does not include notifications in relation to dropped objects. NOPSEMA deemed that, in the majority of cases, these occurrences were sufficiently serious to be escalated for further investigation.

Based on the observed trends in degraded crane safety, NOPSEMA has issued a safety bulletin in relation to the safe operation of cranes with reduced capacity.

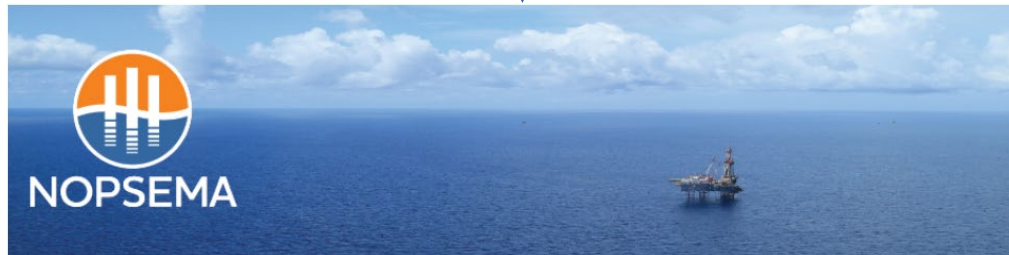
NOPSEMA considers these notifications of dangerous occurrences as lead indicators of risks associated with cranes not being appropriately managed. As such it is clearly an issue that industry needs to acknowledge and address.

New Website

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**National Offshore Petroleum Safety and
Environmental Management Authority**

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